



CGSC: Afghan Instructors Teach Afghan Students

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Mason T. Lowery
OSC-A Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army's Command and General Staff College graduated its sixth class Aug. 22 – the first class taught entirely by Afghan instructors.

The Afghan assumption of instruction responsibilities at the CGSC symbolizes the move toward self-sufficiency and expanding military capabilities of the ANA.

French officers first taught the four-month course when the staff college opened in 2004. They then selected top Afghan graduates from the second class to become instructors. The French gradually transferred authority to the ANA officers and assumed the role of advisors by April 2005.

The French officers will remain at the CGSC to teach new courses in artillery, engineering and logistics, and will again choose top Afghan students from those classes to become future instructors. In a year, the CGSC will have only three French instructors instead of the current eight, said French Army Lt. Col. Gaeton Sevin, chief of the CGSC French training team.

The CGSC trains senior ANA staff officers to serve in command positions at kandak (battalion) or higher levels.

Afghan majors through colonels complete a wide-ranging instruction program that consists of training in staff operations and procedures, topography and tactics, as well as



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lynette M. Jefferson

ANA Col. Azizurahman (right), CGSC graduate, receives his diploma from ANA Maj. Gen. Taj Mohammad (left), 209th Corps commander, as members of the Afghan general staff look on.

computer skills and English language improvement. They also attend numerous conferences and training exercises intended to strengthen their expertise in staff officer operations.

"We are very proud to teach them and can see that the best of them are ready to teach on their own," Sevin said. "Thanks to this school, we have good officers who will be good for the ANA."

ANA Col. Abdul Halim, chief of tactical doctrine at the staff college, said the French prepared him to be an instructor, particularly with com-

puter and language lessons. "We have been taught really well. The French were beside us, and when we taught independently, if there were problems, they helped us," he said.

The CGSC trains senior ANA staff officers to serve in command positions at kandak (battalion) or higher levels.

ANA Maj. Gen. Gullbahar Salim, CGSC commander, expressed his gratitude to the French officers, "I am very thankful to the French for teaching our in-

structors the new tactics. They taught them very well."

Salim said students will benefit from the CGSC's new organization and was optimistic about the future.

“I am very proud of my instructors. ... It is better for the students to learn from Afghans instead of through interpreters.”

He explained that the course will remain four months long until all ANA positions are filled. At that time, the course will be modeled after American military institutions.


The culmination of the sixth class was a Command Post Exercise, said French Army Maj. Pascal Muller, CGSC artillery professor.

In the CPX, three Afghan kandaks faced a fictitious enemy force in an Afghan province. The students acted as members of the different cells of the kandak command post (current operations, plans, artillery, engineers and logistics). The students reacted to incidents, reported to the division, proposed solutions and transmitted orders to subordinate units.

“This exercise was a great success and all visitors were strongly impressed by the quality of the job done by the (Afghan) teachers and

the students from CGSC,” Muller said.

ANA Col. Esmatullah, honor graduate for the class, praised the hands-on approach to learning practiced at the CGSC and compared it to his earlier military education. “(Previously) we would study but not apply. But here we learned how to prepare and present the operational plan to commanders.”

As the graduation ceremony ended, approximately 20 graduates and instructors performed the Attan Dance (also known as the Afghan National Dance). The dance is thousands of years old and is performed by soldiers before they start a mission – in this case, serving the people of Afghanistan. 

“It is better for the students to learn from Afghans instead of through interpreters.”

— ANA Maj. Gen. Gullbahar Salim, CGSC commander



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lynette M. Jefferson

ANA Maj. Gen. Gullbahar Salim (left), CGSC commander, and Lt. Gen. Mohammad Eshaq Noori, ANA deputy chief of staff, review the formation of students during the graduation ceremony.

Photos available upon request to RiceF@cfc-a.centcom.mil